Freedom

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NOTES.

No Jobs in Sight.

If the enormous decline in the foreign trade of this country be taken as a guide, the unemployed stand a poor chance of getting jobs for many a long day. According to figures just published, the value of the exports for last month was only £43,172,000, as compared with £137,451,000 in July last year. But the collapse is shown much more strikingly when we see the export figures in tons for the month of June:—

June, 1913	... ...	7,663,300 tons.
June, 1920	... ...	3,280,000 tons.
June, 1921	... ...	430,000 tons.

The coal strike accounted for most of this collapse, but apart from coal there was a falling-off in other goods of 584,000 tons as compared with June, 1920. No wonder the harbours are full of idle ships, and enormous queues of unemployed line the streets. The miners have now brought the coal output up to the normal quantity, but still trade does not revive. We read that in Scotland there are "miles of unwanted coal-laden wagons," which manufacturers will not take as they say prices are "three times above what trade competition will stand." Evidently this means more drastic cuts in miners' wages when the £10,000,000 grant is exhausted. With the Government dole soon coming to an end, the unemployed look like being faced with starvation. The British workman is a well-trained animal. Like the terriers who have been trained to carry a piece of meat on their nose without eating it, so the starving workman can be trusted to pass shops and restaurants crammed with food for his masters without thinking of helping himself. Even if his wife and children are also starving, he still keeps a firm hand on himself. It is really a wonderful phenomenon. But the best-trained animals sometimes run amuck. Balfour once said "there are limits to human endurance," and we should not be at all surprised if the workers get quite angry soon and say to their masters, politely but firmly: "As you cannot manage to provide us with a decent living, please stand aside and let us try to do it for ourselves." And we are sure they could.

The Moscow Congresses.

We wish we could feel some enthusiasm over the recent Congresses at Moscow of the Communist International and the Red Trade Union International, but to us these gatherings seem somewhat of a farce. Some of the delegates nominate themselves or are nominated by a mere handful of office-holders, and they go to Moscow and claim to represent many thousands of conscious revolutionists, when as a matter of fact they represent a few hundreds at the outside. Last year, for instance, an English delegate at Moscow was reported as representing many thousands of workers in this country, and at a Syndicalist Congress later on at Berlin the same figures were trotted out. Yet at that particular moment this great organisation had not got a penny in its coffers and had the gas cut off at its office because it could not pay its gas bill. But there was plenty of money when the delegate returned from Moscow! We do not know whether there are many similar phantom organisations represented at the Congress, but as long as Moscow finds the funds the supply of delegates will never run dry. This game of bluff does not deceive the capitalists, who know the facts; it only deceives the workers. Besides, whilst the delegates were extolling the revolutionary virtues of the Government of Russia that Government was rapidly transforming its attitude towards the capitalists. Trade agreements were being signed with representatives of Capitalism from all parts of the world, and these will change the economic organisation of Russia so profoundly that even a member of the British Communist Party will be unable to distinguish it from Capitalism. But, of course, he will not admit it.

Powers will not Disarm.

President Harding's invitation to a conference to discuss disarmament and the problems of the Pacific has been accepted, and in a short time the representatives of the great Powers will meet to discuss how they are to plunder China, for, in spite of all the high-sounding phrases about humanity and civilisation, that will be the real subject of the conference. During the war, when the other fellows were busy throttling the Central Powers, Japanese capitalists began to dig themselves in in China, and soon got hold of some of the best industrial and strategic positions. The Shantung peninsula was occupied first of all, and then various excuses were found for the introduction of troops into other parts of the country. The Russian Revolution gave them the opportunity to occupy Vladivostock, thereby strengthening their military position. Now the war is over, American capitalists are demanding a share in the exploitation of China, and they suspect that Britain has been encouraging the Japanese. Hence the Conference. Each of the three Powers is parading its naval strength, to show what it can do in the way of destruction if its interests are endangered. The conference may patch up a sort of armed peace, but nobody imagines that disarmament will be carried out. There is no morality or honourable dealing amongst these politicians and diplomats, and any treaty they may make will become a scrap of paper when they feel strong enough to denounce it. The people, of course, have no share in these secret conferences. A few men, aided by a swarm of experts, will sit round a table and come to decisions affecting the lives of countless millions, who in a few months may be maiming and killing each other because their masters have quarrelled. But these poor fools are terribly shocked if you suggest a Social Revolution.

Russian Bolsheviks and Anarchists.

We have sent the following letter to the Editor of the *Workers' Dreadnought*, but it has not been published:—

DEAR MISS PANKHURST,—In your issue of August 6, under the heading of "The Grief and Glory of Russia," Henry Sara writes:—

> "Several capitalist newspapers have from time to time given much sympathy—and space—to the tales of Bolshevik tyranny towards the Anarchist movement in Moscow. A forged statement is in circulation, bearing signatures of prominent Anarchists like Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and Shapiro."

I presume that Mr. Sara is referring to the letter to Lenin and the principal ruling bodies in Russia, which appeared in FREEDOM (June issue). This letter reached us by means of the underground route which our comrades in Russia are compelled to use, and we have every confidence in its authenticity. Mr. Sara does not give a scrap of evidence in favour of his statement that it is a forgery. But there is one means of testing it which is open to him, as he is a *persona grata* at Moscow. Let him send a copy of FREEDOM, in which the letter appears, to A. Shapiro or Emma Goldman, and ask them whether the letter is genuine. We promise to print their reply in FREEDOM, but stipulate that the reply shall be in their own handwriting. As our letters to Moscow get lost on the way, and FREEDOM meets with the same fate, we must rely on Mr. Sara's good offices We challenge his statement and ask him to supply the proof of it.—Yours sincerely,

THOMAS H. KEELL,
Editor, FREEDOM.

INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST CONGRESS.

An International Anarchist Congress will be held this Autumn, in Berlin or Hamburg. The date has not been definitely fixed, but it will probably be the last week in October.

A meeting will be held in London shortly to discuss the advisability of sending delegates and also subjects for the agenda. Comrades in the provinces are requested to discuss the subject and send us their views, which will be placed before the meeting. Please address letters to FREEDOM Office.

The Two Roads.

Extracts from articles by E. MALATESTA in *Umanità Nova* (Milan), August 5, 11, 15, 1920; reprinted as a pamphlet ("Le Due Vie," Milan, 1920).

———

.....The blindness of the ruling class and the natural evolution of the capitalist system, accelerated by the war, led to this, that any reform whatever which would be acceptable to the owners of property is powerless to solve the crisis under which the country labours.

Hence the revolution is imposing itself, the revolution is coming.

But how must this revolution be effected, and what development must it take?

It is, of course, necessary to begin by that insurrectional action which will sweep away the material obstacle, the armed forces of the Government, which opposes every social change.

For this insurrection, since here [in Italy] we live in a monarchy, the union of all the anti-monarchist forces is desirable. It is necessary to be prepared, morally and materially, in the best possible way, and it is before all necessary to profit by all spontaneous popular movements and to endeavour to make them general and to transform them into decisive movements, in order that, whilst the parties are preparing themselves, the popular forces shall not be exhausted by isolated outbreaks.

But after the victory of the insurrection, after the fall of the Government, what must be done then?

We, the Anarchists, wish that in each locality the workers, or, more properly, that part of the workers which has the clearest insight of their position and the readiest spirit of initiative, should take possession of all the instruments of labour, all wealth, land, raw materials, houses, machinery, foodstuffs, etc., and should sketch out as far as possible the new form of social life. We wish that the agricultural labourers who now toil for their masters should no longer recognise the rights of any landlords, and should continue and intensify their work on their own account, entering into direct relations with the industrial and transport workers for the exchange of products; that the industrial workers, leading engineers and the technical staff included, should take possession of the factories, and should continue and intensify their work on their own account and that of the community, transforming rapidly all those factories which produce useless or harmful things into establishments for the production of articles which the people most urgently need; that the railway workers should continue to run the railways, but for the use of the community; that communities of voluntary workers, locally elected, should, under the direct control of the masses, take possession of all available habitations, to shelter as best the hour will permit all the most indigent; that other committees, always under the direct control of the masses, should provide for the food supply and the distribution of articles of daily use; that all real bourgeois be placed under the necessity of merging with the mass of the former proletarians and of working like them in order to enjoy the same benefit as they. And all this must be effected quickly, on the same day as the victorious insurrection or the day after, without waiting for orders from central committees or any other authority whatever.

This is what the Anarchists want and this also would naturally happen if the revolution is really to be a Social Revolution and not limited to a simple political change which, after some convulsions, would lead everything back to the starting-point.

For either the bourgeois class is rapidly stripped of its economic power or it will soon take back also the political power of which the insurrection deprived it. And to strip the bourgeois class of its economic power it is necessary to organise immediately a new economic order founded upon justice and equality. The economic services, at least the most important ones, admit of no interruption and must be satisfied quickly. "Central committees" either do nothing or begin to act when their work is no longer needed.

In opposition to Anarchists, many revolutionists have no confidence in the constructive power of the masses; they believe themselves to be in possession of infallible recipes for universal happiness; they fear a possible reaction; they fear perhaps more the competition of other parties and other schools of social reformers, and they want, therefore, to possess themselves of all power and to replace the "democratic" government of to-day by a dictatorial government.

Dictatorship they mean; but who would be the dictators? Of course, so they think, the chiefs of their party. They still use the words "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," either from habit or from a conscious desire to evade plain explanations; but this is to-day an exploded farce.

———

.....So we will leave this wrong term of proletarian dictatorship, which leads to so many misunderstandings, and speak of dictatorship as it really is—that is, of the absolute domination of one or several individuals who, by the support of a party or of an army, become the masters of the social body and impose their will "with violence and with terror" [phrase used in the Socialist paper *Avanti*].

What their will may be depends upon the quality of those who in any particular case get hold of the power. In our case it is supposed to be the will of the Communists, hence a will inspired with the desire of the common good.

This is rather doubtful already, because as a rule those who are best qualified to seize the reins of power are not the most sincere and the most devoted friends of the public cause, and when submission to a new Government is preached to the masses, this means but paving the way for intriguers and ambitious persons.

But let us suppose that the new rulers, the dictators who will put into practice the aims of the revolution, are true Communists, full of zeal, convinced that upon their work and their energy the happiness of mankind depends. They may be men of the Torquemada and Robespierre type, who, for a good purpose, in the name of private or public salvation, would strangle every discordant voice, destroy every breath of free and spontaneous life—and yet, powerless to solve the practical problems which they withdraw from competent handling by the interested parties themselves, they must willingly or unwillingly give way to those who will restore the past.

The principal justifications of dictatorship are the alleged incapacity of the masses and the necessity of defending the revolution against reactionary attempts.

If the masses were really a dumb flock unable to live without the staff of the shepherd, if a sufficiently numerous and conscious minority able to carry away the masses by persuasion and example did not already exist, then we would be able to understand the standpoint of the reformers who are afraid of a popular upheaval and fancy that they can, bit by bit, by small reforms, small improvements, undermine the bourgeois State and prepare the road to Socialism; we would be able to understand the educationists who, underrating the influence of surroundings, hope to change society by previously changing all individuals; but we really cannot understand the partisans of dictatorship who want to educate and raise the masses "by violence and terror," and so must use gendarmes and censors as prime factors of education.

In reality, nobody could be in the position to establish a revolutionary dictatorship if the people had not previously made the revolution, thus showing effectively that it is able to make it; and in this case dictatorship would only step on the neck of the revolution, divert, strangle, and kill it.

In a political revolution proposing only to overthrow the Government and leaving intact the existing social organisation, a dictatorship may seize power, place its men in the posts of the deposed functionaries, and organise a new régime from above.

But in a social revolution where all the foundations of social life are overthrown, where production must be quickly re-established for the benefit of those who work, where distribution must be immediately regulated according to justice, a dictatorship could do nothing. Either the people will provide for themselves in the various communities and industries or the revolution will be a failure.

———

.....That fear of reaction, used to justify the dictatorial system, springs from the fact that it pretends to make the revolution whilst a privileged class, able to take hold again of power, is still permitted to exist.

If, on the contrary, the beginning is made by complete expropriation, then a bourgeois class will no longer exist, and all the living forces of the proletariat, all existing capacities, will be employed on social reconstruction.

After all, in a country like Italy (to apply these remarks to the country in which we work), where the masses are penetrated by libertarian and rebel instincts, where Anarchists represent a considerable force by the influence which they can exercise quite apart from their organisations, an attempt at dictatorship could not be made without provoking civil war between workers and workers, and could not succeed unless it were by means of the most ferocious tyranny.

In that case, good-bye to Communism!

There is only one possible way of salvation: Liberty.

———

The *Morning Post* and other aristocratic papers are now publishing endless articles about the conspiracy to destroy the British Empire. We retort with a quotation from an acknowledged English classic. In his "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," chap. xiv., Thorold Rogers wrote: "I contend that from 1563 to 1824 a conspiracy, concocted by the law and carried out by parties interested in its success, was entered into to cheat the English workman of his wages, to tie him to the soil, to deprive him of hope, and to degrade him into irremediable poverty." And in our opinion this conspiracy still exists.

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POSSESSION—NOT PROPERTY.

I have accomplished my task; property is conquered, never again to rise. Wherever this work ["What is Property?"] is read and discussed, there will be deposited the germ of death to property; there, sooner or later, privilege and servitude will disappear, and the despotism of will will give place to the reign of reason. What sophisms, indeed, what prejudices (however obstinate) can stand before the simplicity of the following propositions:—

I. Individual *possession** is the condition of social life; five thousand years of property demonstrate it. *Property* is the suicide of society. Possession is a right; property is against right. Suppress property while maintaining possession, and, by this simple modification of the principle, you will revolutionise law, government, economy, and institutions; you will drive evil from the face of the earth.

II. All having an equal right of occupancy, possession varies with the number of possessors; property cannot establish itself.

III. The effect of labour being the same for all, property is lost in the common prosperity.

IV. All human labour being the result of collective force, all property becomes, in consequence, collective and unitary. To speak more exactly, labour destroys property.

V. Every capacity for labour being, like every instrument of labour, an accumulated capital, and a collective property, inequality of wages and fortunes (on the ground of inequality of capacities) is, therefore, injustice and robbery.

VI. The necessary conditions of commerce are the liberty of the contracting parties and the equivalence of the products exchanged. Now, value being expressed by the amount of time and outlay which each product costs, and liberty being inviolable, the wages of labourers (like their rights and duties) should be equal.

VII. Products are bought only by products. Now, the condition of all exchange being equivalence of products, profit is impossible and unjust. Observe this elementary principle of economy, and pauperism, luxury, oppression, vice, crime, and hunger will disappear from our midst.

VIII. Men are associated by the physical and mathematical law of production before they are voluntarily associated by choice. Therefore, equality of conditions is demanded by justice; that is, by strict social law: esteem, friendship, gratitude, admiration, all fall within the domain of *equitable* or *proportional* law only.

IX. Free association, liberty—whose sole function is to maintain equality in the means of production and equivalence in exchanges—is the only possible, the only just, the only true form of society.

X. Politics is the science of liberty. The government of man by man (under whatever name it be disguised) is oppression. Society finds its highest perfection in the union of order with Anarchy.

The old civilisation has run its race; a new sun is rising, and will soon renew the face of the earth. Let the present generation perish, let the old prevaricators die in the desert! the holy earth shall not cover their bones. Young man, exasperated by the corruption of the age, and absorbed in your zeal for justice!—if your country is dear to you, and if you have the interests of humanity at heart, have the courage to espouse the cause of liberty. Cast off your old selfishness, and plunge into the rising flood of popular equality! There your regenerate soul will acquire new life and vigour; your enervated genius will recover unconquerable energy; and your heart, perhaps already withered, will be rejuvenated! Everything will wear a different look to your illuminated vision; new sentiments will engender new ideas within you; religion, morality, poetry, art, language will appear before you in nobler and fairer forms; and thenceforth, sure of your faith, and thoughtfully enthusiastic, you will hail the dawn of universal regeneration!

And you, sad victims of an odious law!—you, whom a jesting world despoils and outrages!—you, whose labour has always been fruitless, and whose rest has been without hope,—take courage! your tears are numbered! The fathers have sown in affliction, the children shall reap in rejoicings!

P. J. PROUDHON.

DEATH OF JOHN TAMLYN.

We regret to announce the death of John Tamlyn, who passed away at Plymouth on August 6, aged 63. He contributed letters and articles to FREEDOM on several occasions, besides being a popular speaker at Plymouth. He was very active almost to the last.

* Individual possession is no obstacle to extensive cultivation and unity of exploitation. If I have not spoken of the drawbacks arising from small estates, it is because I thought it useless to repeat what so many others have said, and what by this time all the world must know. But I am surprised that the economists, who have so clearly shown the disadvantages of spade husbandry, have failed to see that it is caused entirely by property; above all, that they have not perceived that their plan for mobilising the soil is a first step towards the abolition of property.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Switzerland.

A recent number of *Il Risveglio* gives the amount of taxation on wages, calculated at 5,000 francs a year, imposed in thirty-six towns. It varies to an extraordinary extent, ranging from 30 francs at Glarona to 423 at Arbon, and the editor remarks that, despite these enormous differences, the working man seems to be just as badly off at the former place as at the latter. He adds: "It is not where the Socialists are in the majority that the wages-tax is at its lowest, but quite the reverse; nevertheless the Socialists still chant their song about the heavy taxes they intend to impose on Capital, and how they will exempt Labour. They have become so scientific that they have forgotten the elementary principle that Labour always pays the bill, since it alone produces value." Switzerland is in the midst of a veritable orgy of taxation, and times are very bad. Meanwhile Labour has every appearance of being mentally paralysed. As *Le Réveil* puts it: "The fatalism that bourgeois education, aided by false Marxist science, has developed among the masses is incredible. They say 'It is the crisis' as resignedly as one remarks 'It is raining.'"

Both these papers, issued together and under one editorship, furnish their readers with admirable extracts and original articles which set out with great lucidity the bases of Anarchism and the tactics it necessarily must employ. It is astonishing how complete has been the accord on all questions of principle among those recognised as having been Anarchism's ablest exponents, and it is also astonishing how many professed Anarchists seem to have forgotten, under the stress of recent events, those principles. An article by Malatesta, written more than thirty years ago, shatters the illusion of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat (in reality an old illusion dating back, at least, to the French Revolution) as effectively as if it had been written to-day.

The Anarchists of Eastern Switzerland held a convention recently, in which there appears to have been exhibited a fixed determination to extend and intensify propaganda work, especially along the line of vigorous opposition to whatever smacks of reliance on the State. All indorsement of Dictatorship was denounced unsparingly. It is explained that the present high cost of travel, coupled with a terrible amount of unemployment, has made it impossible to hold a Congress embracing the whole of Switzerland.

Italy.

The Fascisti are said to have killed some four thousand people—men, women, and children—almost exclusively from the working and revolutionary class. *Il Risveglio* reprints a telegram giving the details of a conference held at Stefani, July 25, between Fascisti and Socialists, at which a peace programme was elaborated. We learn that a treaty of peace has now been signed. This seems to us most pitiful, for in all these outrages the Fascisti have been simply the dagger with which the governing class has struck, and they have wrecked Anarchist, Socialist, and Trade Union headquarters with an impartial hand. The Government, whose dirty work they did while the country was much disturbed, is now calling a halt to their activities; and *Il Risveglio* properly remarks that this is precisely the method of suppressing them which should not be welcomed. What is needed is that the workers themselves suppress them, for the Government will merely employ policemen and soldiers in their stead, leaving the workers helpless and terrorised as ever.

Spain.

While the Government is wading through the mire of its infamous Morocco campaign, affairs at home grow worse and worse. A veritable "White Terror" rages, Barcelona being, as usual, the centre of the storm. In Andalusia, Valencia, and Saragossa, however, the position is nearly as bad, and ruthless repression of all Syndicalist activities is everywhere the order of the day. Thousands have been imprisoned and deported, and the assassination of those prominent in the Labour movement has become an everyday affair. The latest case brought to our attention is that of Evelio Boal, Antonio Felicé, and José Dominguez the first two of whom were respectively secretary and treasurer of the General Confederation of Labour. They had been held in gaol in Barcelona since March 1, but were released July 17. On issuing from the gaol they were beaten brutally by the authorities, and almost immediately afterwards shot dead in the street.

We are glad to see that *Solidaridad*, Spanish organ of the I.W.W., published in Chicago, is bringing out a special number which will be devoted exclusively to an exposure of what is now going on in Spain. Meanwhile we welcome the appearance, at Saragossa, of *El Libertario*, a new Anarchist paper, straight as a die and packed with admirable propaganda. Such publications are brought out at great personal risk and under extraordinary difficulties. In short, the indomitable spirit displayed by our Spanish comrades is beyond all praise; but for years past they have exhibited, in the face of a modern Inquisition, heroism that should be an inspiration to Labour throughout the world.

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The Control of Industry.

"The control of industry" is a phrase that was much in evidence during the miners' strike, and many Trade Unionists seem to be of the impression that such a thing is possible without first getting rid of Capitalism. The miners have flirted with the idea, and the railwaymen's leaders led the members of their Unions to believe that a share in the control of the railways was a possibility of the near future. But these dreams have proved false, and the masters have not the slightest idea of giving up their old claim to "do what they like with their own." When the metal-workers seized the factories in Italy, they were persuaded to evacuate them by a promise from Giolitti, the Prime Minister, that a Bill would be brought into Parliament at once which would give the workers a share in the control of the factories. The workers of Italy are still waiting for that share. Of course, the whole thing was a trick, and Giolitti and the masters never meant to keep their promise.

The desire of the workers to control the industries in which they are employed is an expression of their desire to control their own lives and livelihood. But in this laudable idea they appear to us to be trying to build a house without first putting in the foundations, for how is it possible for the workers to control their own lives unless they have their feet planted firmly on Mother Earth, thus ensuring their food-supply? In all the schemes which are put forward nowadays as short cuts to the millennium not one of them starts with a foundation on the land. Some years ago Lloyd George made a name for himself by attacking landlordism, and he set most of the workers singing the "Land Song," which told them that "God gave the land to the people." But to-day all that is forgotten; Lloyd George has made his peace—and pieces—with the landlords, and the workers now sing another song.

We shall never even begin to solve our social problems until we recognise the solid fact that they are all bound up with this question of the monopoly of land. The landlords bar the way everywhere, and exercise a powerful and subtle influence in our governmental institutions, as is shown by several happenings of recent years. When restrictions were imposed on the rents of houses, ground rents were untouched and soon rose by leaps and bounds, many landlords doubling their incomes by breaking up their estates and selling them during the boom period. When the Sankey Commission was sitting we heard much about landlords' royalties on coal and other minerals; but that question was mysteriously sidetracked, and was hardly mentioned during the coal strike. Even the £150 bonus on new houses helped to fill the landlords' purse, because it enabled them to levy higher ground rents. One would think that the submarine warfare would have made the country realise the necessity of growing its own food, thereby becoming independent of overseas supplies; but again landlordism bars the way, and the area under cultivation is less now than during the war. These facts show the great power wielded by the landlords, and to some extent explain why Labour politicians and other office-seekers never tackle the land question in a radical manner.

Even the Socialists and Communists seldom mention the land question, owing to the fact that Marx, from whom they get most of their ideas, hardly touched the subject, but practically confined himself to the question of capitalist production and the factory system. In Russia the power of the Dictatorship is based on the factory worker, and the present disastrous famine in Russia, mainly due to the prolonged drought, has been accentuated by the attitude of the Government towards the peasants, whose rôle since the Revolution has been that of hewers of wood and drawers of water to the town population. This is the great lesson to be learned from the Russian Revolution—a Social Revolution can only be successful when there is a true spirit of co-operation between town workers and land workers. In this country, where we grow only about a quarter of the food we consume, it is of vital importance that the land workers should be sympathetic to a revolution, otherwise it would be starved out in a month.

The landlords will do their utmost to prevent co-operation between town and country, and proposals have already been put forward for linking up all agricultural organisations—farmers and labourers—in one federation, similar to the so-called Green International of the peasants in Europe. But the agricultural labourer is beginning to wake up and is much more inclined to kick now than before the war. It should be the task of our movement, therefore, to do what lies in its power to carry the propaganda into the country districts, whilst at the same time pointing out to the factory worker the impossibility of living a full and free life until the land has been freed from the grip of the landlords. When the workers have grasped this idea they will then begin to build a new and more humane society on a sound foundation.

A CRY FROM A RUSSIAN PRISON.

Further evidence of the ill-treatment of Anarchists and other political opponents by the Bolsheviks is furnished by the letter printed below, which reaches us from a thoroughly reliable source. It was sent to our comrades in Moscow, who have sent copies for publication in the Anarchist and Syndicalist press.

Ryazan Concentration Camp of Forced Labour,
April 27th, 1921.

DEAR COMRADES,—We hasten to inform you that we are at present in the Ryazan Concentration Camp of Forced Labour. We were brought here yesterday, that is, April 26. There are here in all only ten of us Anarchists—David Kogan, Kurbatoff, Liloff, Tarasiuk, Konstantin Feodoroff, Boudanoff, Khokhotva, Gavriloff, Pilipenko, and Fanya Baron. Besides these ten of us, they also brought here from the same Bootirka* nine members of the Right Social Revolutionists, and sixteen Menshiviki; in all, thirty-five persons. They took us from the Bootirka prison in the night of the 25–26th of April, between 3–5 in the morning. They took all the Socialists, over 300 persons. They took us by force. Many were beaten. We were taken in our night-clothes, though later on we were permitted to return, singly, for our things. The women were most of all maltreated. Some of them had their heads broken. The warders threw the women down the stairs, and some women were dragged out by their hair. I myself was so badly beaten that I still ache all over my body. Those offering resistance were beaten worst of all. Altogether, the prison that night was a veritable nightmare, a horror which I lack words to describe.

We were all divided into groups; the whereabouts of five whom they have taken are still unknown to us. We beg you to make immediate inquiry through the "Political Red Cross" or "Black Cross" (Anarchist Red Cross to aid imprisoned Anarchists). Let us know as soon as possible where and how the others are, and also inform them about us. We do not know yet if we shall remain here, or whether they intend to transfer us somewhere else.

Conditions of life here are terrible. The cells are unhealthy. No exercise or airing permitted. Food is scarce and filthy. Everywhere awful dirt and bed-bugs and other parasites. We mean soon to declare a hunger-strike for better conditions.

We have just been told to get ready with our things. They are going to send us away; I do not know yet where to.

With fraternal greetings, I. V. TARASIUK.

P.S.—Ryazan Prison, April 28th.—Last evening they transferred us to the prison. We are in total isolation. It appears that, by order of the Extraordinary Commission, they are to keep us in strict isolation. The thirty-five of us are in one cell. It will be very, very hard to exist here, especially after the Bootirka régime. Let us know which comrades remained in the Bootirka or in other Moscow prisons. I beg of you to find out and inform me where Tania Avrutzkaya is or to where she has been taken. Let her know about me, and transmit my greetings. Thus it's all at an end. My best wishes, with comradely regards.

IVAN TARASIUK.

Ryazan Prison, 3rd Corridor, Cell 12.

* *Translator's Note.*—On the night of April 25-26, 1921, all the political prisoners in the Bootirka Prison (Moscow), numbering about 400, were kidnapped by the secret police, beaten, and sent to various prisons in different parts of the country. Their whereabouts and the cause of their sudden and violent transfer could so far not be ascertained. This *sub rosa* letter is the first news received from any of the prisoner-groups.

MALATESTA ACQUITTED.

After lying in gaol nine months, Malatesta and Armando Borghi were brought to trial at Milan last month, and—acquitted. The indictment, which contained originally more than seventy counts, had been reduced, at the last moment, to one simple charge of having violated the law. Meanwhile, of course, by this prolonged detention the Government had attained its main object; that is to say, at a time of much disturbance it had put two powerful agitators out of the way. Now that all danger of an immediate revolution apparently is past, general discouragement has set in, and they are released.

Malatesta made a short and simple speech, which seems to have had a profound effect. Touching briefly on his long and active past, he stated incidentally that while in prison he had celebrated the fifty-fifth anniversary of his first arrest. He described the innumerable difficulties that had beset his return to Italy, into which he finally was smuggled, and the triumphal reception with which he met. "The Government," he said, "was non-existent, and the Revolution, though not a realised fact, was imminent." Those who were obeying the law could have been counted more easily than those who were violating it, for all the prisons in the country could not have held the latter. In such circumstances there had been no need for him to incite the masses, and "although a revolutionist in both the philosophical and historical sense, a populist and an insurrectionist," his role at the time was that of attempting to so direct the movement that useless sacrifices might be avoided. "I have always said to the proletariat," he added, "the Revolution is coming, and if the Government attacks you, defend yourselves. I protest against the charge of having incited class hatred. The class struggle is a useful and necessary phenomenon. All who are seeking the good of the poor are adding to that struggle.....We Anarchists are not for dictatorship. On the contrary, we are opposed to it, because we wish that all men should work as brothers for the common welfare."

At the next session Malatesta made a special declaration on the subject of the bomb explosion at the Diana Theatre, Milan, in which he protested against "the work of a madman" being attributed to Anarchists, as is the invariable habit of the police. In truth, if the authorities or an over-excited public had given the matter a moment's honest thought the absurdity of such an accusation would have been self-evident. The entire Italian Anarchist movement was working eagerly for the prisoners' release, and assuredly it was not at such a moment that it, or any member of it, would do the very thing most calculated to inflame public opinion and thereby damn their case.

What is to be said on all this question of violence is, in our opinion, precisely this:—

"You, you in power, who run the Juggernaut that crushes the masses remorselessly beneath its wheels, must expect these things! You must expect them because you yourselves habitually commit murder on the most gigantic scale. You think nothing of slaughtering millions in wars waged for the maintenance or increase of your own power and wealth. You think nothing of starving other millions by those blockades you have adopted as one of the most efficacious means of waging war. These tactics you pursue unceasingly even in so-called times of peace, for the weapon by which you bring the workers beneath your heel is always Hunger. Thereby you produce a mass of misery no thought can measure and no pen or tongue describe—a mass of needless misery created solely by your own greed—and from that mass of misery Avengers come. If they strike madly it is because you, reducing them to helplessness by your insatiable ambitions, have made them mad. If, working on a larger and more intelligent scale, they plan and foment Revolutions, it is because your gross and most unintelligent selfishness has made the consummation of a real and completely successful Revolution, at this particular epoch, the FIRST NECESSITY OF INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL LIFE."

This seems to us the lesson not only of the slaughter at the Diana Theatre, but also of the present situation in Italy and everywhere. The world *cannot* go on with the inequalities now existent, and it should not if it could. It is sinking more and more deeply into the bog of slavery, and from that bog it has to extricate itself, at any cost, or perish. Many who do not call themselves Anarchists, and do not even know that they are Anarchists, to-day hold that belief. Our own special task, as we see things, is to voice it boldly.

We may take courage from history to hope that generations will come to whom our system of distributing among a few the privileges and delights that are produced by the toil of many will seem just as wasteful, just as morally hideous, and as scientifically indefensible as that older system which impoverished and depopulated empires, in order that a despot or caste might have no least wish ungratified for which the lives or hard-won treasure of others could suffice.—*John Morley.*

Nothing is more disgusting than the crowing about liberty by slaves, as most men are, and the flippant mistaking for freedom of some paper preamble like a Declaration of Independence, or the statutory right to vote, by those who have never dared to act.—*Emerson.*

SOME RUSSIAN TRUTHS.

Students of the Russian Revolution find themselves well-nigh strangled by hireling liars who stick at nothing. The Money Power has lied unceasingly through all its myriad mouthpieces because, at one anxious moment, Russia's masses seemed really likely to shake off its yoke. The new Tsardom lies because it means to retain its throne. The international brotherhood of politicians lies because it lives by fishing in troubled waters, and lies are its most killing bait. Finally, the great army of fanatics lies day and night, because fanatics consider lying on behalf of the party to which they have attached themselves a holy duty.

Is it not deplorable? The first result is that the world's disinherited, unable to make head or tail of so confused a story, are losing interest in this great struggle and sinking once more into the apathy of death. The second result is that what should have been a clear lesson has become a mere swirl of noise, in which all sense of realities is lost. That can only mean one thing ultimately—reaction of the extremest type; intelligence conquered by brute force; the triumph of Imperialism, whatever name or disguise it may adopt.

As it appears to me—and I say it sincerely—we Anarchists are about the only people really anxious to get at the truth in this great matter. None could have been more eager for the success of the Revolution than we have been, because none understand better the ferocity of the reaction that, in the event of failure, must ensue. We are not in the pay of the Money Power, which habitually deports us or throws us into prison. We have no finger in the funds being squandered, very foolishly as I think, by the Bolsheviks on worthless papers and still more worthless agitators in this and other countries. In fact, the Lenin crowd, devout worshippers of the State fetich, hate us far more bitterly than they hate the great governmental Powers whose aid they are soliciting to-day, and with whom, if they survive the present crisis, they will be found hand in glove to-morrow.

Let no one forget for one single moment that the one fixed determination of the Bolshevik Government is that it, as a Government, shall survive; that it shall not lose one shred of the garment of Authority in which it has clothed itself so sumptuously. To this it will sacrifice everything, and for this end it will victimise the international proletariat quite as remorselessly as it has victimised its peasantry, fully nine-tenths of the inhabitants of its own country. It has been stripping those peasants to the bone, and if any one challenges that statement I refer him to L. Petrovsky's article in the June number of the *Communist Review*, a publication subsidised heavily by the Bolsheviks. There he will find a table of the amount of food hitherto extracted from the peasants by the Government, at the point of the bayonet, as compared with what it is now proposed to take by taxes. In the year 1920 21 Lenin's armed collectors wrung from the helpless peasantry fifteen thousand two hundred and twenty-eight million pounds of corn alone, and the figures of other agricultural products are in proportion. It is now proposed to get by taxes, in the year 1921-22, the smaller amount of eight thousand six hundred and forty million pounds of corn; and Mr. Petrovsky publishes these figures with pride, as illustrative of his Government's generosity!

To me as an Anarchist, and one therefore who detests all robbery of the masses by the few in power, such figures are appalling. They stir my deepest indignation, and I follow the course of events in Russia with an interest no other subject can now arouse. I understand that a gigantic experiment in Marxian Socialism is now on trial; that the whole Marx-Socialist programme has been carried out with unflinching logic; that the entire resources of a huge country have been made the private property of the governing machine; and that, as always and everywhere, the machine's one object is to run the people of Russia and not allow them to run themselves. How could such an experiment fail to interest me, or any genuine Anarchist?

Out of the grim welter of lies certain grim and undeniable facts, as it seems to me, emerge. First, at this moment some twenty million Russian peasants are on the march, fleeing piteously from real starvation. The result of drought, you say. True, but their utter helplessness is owing to the fact that they were not allowed to accumulate reserves, as is the natural instinct of the thrifty peasant. Indeed, so hopeless had their position become that they systematically allowed their land to go out of cultivation and confined themselves to raising only such produce as enabled them to live from hand to mouth.

Secondly, enormous concessions are being given to foreign capitalists and to the agents of foreign Governments. Mr. Vanderlip, for example, boasts that he has secured for the United States two invaluable naval bases. Have you any idea as to the extent of those concessions? No, you have not, and nobody has. These deals are put through behind the curtain of a secret diplomacy of the very basest type. The history of Mexico under Porfirio Diaz is being repeated, for Diaz also climbed into power through a revolution, and the strategy he employed the Bolsheviks are copying.

Thirdly, in the extermination of those who stood between them and their road to supreme power the Bolshevik rulers have been absolutely ruthless, and, as was inevitable, their chief victims have been the Anarchists. It is true, of course, that the Anarchists had been among the foremost in bringing about the Revolution that swung Lenin into

power, but sentiment cuts no figure in these movements. The man who is at the head of a great State counts as his greatest enemy the disbeliever in the State. Lenin aims at making the State the one great capitalist, and we for our part have always maintained that of all imaginable social structures this Imperial Socialism would be, and would prove itself speedily to be, the very worst. Therefore, to Lenin and his supporters we are the worst of foes.

There has come to our table, from U.S.A., a 70-page pamphlet entitled "Anarchism and the World Revolution," by Fred S. Graham (15c., published privately). It is an answer to Robert Minor, who has become conspicuous of late as a sudden convert to Bolshevism. The pamphlet develops at some length, and with much exact scholarship, the points I have endeavoured to express; and the author has no difficulty in demonstrating that if Mr. Minor spoke the truth when he came fresh from Russia, he has been lying most brazenly since his conversion. I recommend it to the student,* it being understood that the object of all study is to get as near as possible to truth.

It was after reading the pamphlet named that I started this article with some remarks on lies; but indeed I take the exposure of lies as being nineteen-twentieths of the Anarchist's task. Always and everywhere the liar is our greatest enemy. It is he who hamstrings advance by the mental confusion he brings into all counsels. It is he who puffs up the masses with false hopes, that they may fall subsequently with a more paralysing thud. It is he who makes a mere windbag of a cause that, resting on eternal verities, should be as solid as a rock. And the most pernicious form of lie is that fraudulent use of language whereby black, shaded away through many grades of colour, is made finally to look like white.

W. C. O.

Mollie Steimer's Courageous Stand.

If the four young Russians, Jacob Abrams, Samuel Lipman, Hyman Lachowsky, and Mollie Steimer, can be deported to Russia, the United States Attorney-General states in a letter to Harry Weinberger, their attorney, "I might be disposed to recommend a commutation of their sentences in order that they might be deported."

Inasmuch as no one is admitted into Russia from America at the present time, Mr. Weinberger cabled to the Russian Soviet Government as follows: "Government will release Jacob Abrams, Samuel Lipman, Hyman Lachowsky, and Mollie Steimer, if Russia will cable me they will be admitted." Up to the present time no reply has been received, but one is expected shortly.

These Russians were sentenced at the end of 1919 to twenty years' and fifteen years' imprisonment for distributing leaflets protesting against United States' military intervention in Russia, though Judge Holmes and Judge Brandeis of the United States Supreme Court, in a dissenting opinion, said:—

> "In this case, sentences of twenty years' imprisonment have been imposed for publishing two leaflets that I believe the defendants had as much right to publish as the Government had to publish the Constitution of the United States, now vainly invoked by them. . . . . I regret that I cannot put into more impressive words my belief that in their conviction upon this indictment the defendants were deprived of their rights under the Constitution of the United States."

In the last month of President Wilson's term he commuted their sentences to two years and six months' actual imprisonment, which does not expire for about one year more.

Warrants of deportation have been issued by the Department of Labour for these four Russians. Abrams and Lipman have given the additional assurance required by the Attorney-General; Lachowsky has refused, though he stated that he will not fight deportation. Mollie Steimer takes up the same attitude, and sent the following spirited letter to Mr. Weinberger:—

> "My dear Mr. Weinberger,—In your letter of June 28th you state that there is a possibility of general amnesty, and ask what I wish to do if the Government proceeds with my deportation—would I choose Russia or some other country to be deported to?
>
> "You give the following reasons for your question: (1) The extremely bad material conditions in Russia; (2) People of my belief are daily jailed there.
>
> "On the whole, this letter shows that you are earnestly thinking of my well-being, and I fully appreciate the fine spirit in which it is written. However, this is my view on the matter:
>
> "I do not give my consent to deportation, and therefore I will not choose any place to be deported to. The Government of the United States will send me out of here by force, and it will naturally send me to the land where I was born, which act I will not oppose. I will not avoid going to Russia because a severe persecution is carried on there against my comrades, the Anarchists. All Governments of all lands, regardless of the name they bear, are oppressive institutions. Anarchists who advocate their ideas are imprisoned in the French Republic, in the British Empire, in the German 'Right Socialist' Republic, as well as in the Russian 'Left Socialist' Republic.
>
> "I know that I have a hard struggle ahead of me; that I will have to face deprivation in Russia, and most likely I will be persecuted for my belief in Anarchism. But I also know that in order to further the cause I love so dearly, the cause of real freedom and happiness for all, I must be ready to suffer and sacrifice, and therefore I will not oppose my deportation to Russia.
> —Very sincerely, MOLLIE STEIMER."

Mr. Weinberger has asked the Attorney-General to have the sentences commuted at once, so that our comrades can be kept at Ellis Island, where they can see their friends and relatives before being deported.

* We hope to have a few copies for sale shortly. Price, 1s. 3d. post-free.

American Comrades Rally to our Support.

We have received a splendid response this month to our appeal for assistance, our comrades at the Ferrer Colony, Stelton, N.J., having sent us the sum of £35 16s. 10d., the proceeds of a collection and a dinner and entertainment on behalf of FREEDOM. It is a great pleasure to know that our work is appreciated by our comrades on the other side of the Atlantic. We hope, however, that our comrades at home will not slacken their financial support, and would specially appeal to all who owe us money to settle up as soon as possible. The following sums have been received up to August 8:—

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The Unknown ...	3	0	0	H. P. B. ...	1	0	0	M. Lenoble ...	0	2	0
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K. B. Elliman...	0	5	0	Coll'ct'd by E. M.—				R. Packer ...	0	1	0
				E. M.	0	2	6	Helena ...	0	0	6
				A. G.	0	1	0	Hetty Lewis ...	0	2	0
				S. G.	0	1	0	A Comrade ...	0	10	0
				Zintle	0	0	6	F. D.	0	1	0

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